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Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 60/52 of 8 December 2005 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to pursue consultations with the States of the region and other concerned States, in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 46/30 of 6 December 1991, taking into account the evolving situation in the region, and to seek from those States their views on the measures outlined in chapters III and IV of the study annexed to his report of 10 October 1990 (A/45/435) or other relevant measures, in order to move towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In paragraph 11 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit the current report to its sixty-first session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. On 17 February 2006, a note verbale was sent to all Member States drawing their attention to paragraph 10 of resolution 60/52 and seeking their views on the matter. The replies received from Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Jamaica, Japan, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritius, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates are reproduced in section III below. Any replies subsequently received from other Member States will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Observations

3. The issue of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East remains important. It is recalled that, in the general debate and during deliberations on the issue at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in New York from 2 to 27 May 2005, States parties reiterated their support for the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, reaffirmed the importance of the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and recognized that the resolution remained valid until its goals and objectives were achieved.

4. The Secretary-General has on several occasions had various consultations with concerned parties within and outside the region in order to explore further ways and means of promoting the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The Secretary-General is concerned that developments in the region since his previous report on the subject of 18 July 2005 (A/60/126 (Part I)) could have an impact on efforts towards the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

5. The Secretary-General reiterates that continued efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace are needed and hopes that conditions will soon be met to give new impetus to the Road Map developed by the Quartet of the European Union, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the United Nations. The Secretary-General calls upon all concerned parties within and outside the region to resume dialogue with a view to creating stable security conditions and an eventual settlement that would facilitate the process of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. The Secretary-General reiterates the continued readiness of the United Nations to provide any assistance deemed helpful in that regard.

06-43036

III. Replies received from Governments

Bolivia

[Original: Spanish]
[8 June 2006]

General Assembly resolution 60/52 of 8 December 2005 reaffirms the critical importance of effective verification measures in non-proliferation, arms-control and disarmament agreements and other similar obligations, and the essential contribution that they have made in this regard.

Bolivia considers that actions taken to eliminate any possibility of using nuclear weapons in any part of the world should be supported by the international community.

Mankind is aware of the devastating effects of these weapons and of the uncertainty of living under the threat of their use. Human beings, regardless of race, creed, religion, culture or political ideology, should have the right to condemn any attempt to produce, acquire, possess or use nuclear weapons and also to receive information with respect to their effects.

General Assembly resolution 60/52 must be supported by the Bolivian Government, as it constitutes a legal precedent which aims to free the Middle East from the nuclear threat, which, regrettably, is present in the region. However, Bolivia would request that the right of all States to acquire and develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes be permanently recalled and taken into account, as set forth in the preamble to the resolution.

Canada

[Original: English]
[16 May 2006]

1. Canada supports General Assembly resolution 60/52, which calls for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Canada has called on the United Nations for full adherence and compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by States parties in the region, and has urged the four States parties to the Treaty (Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Oman) in the region that have not signed or ratified comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as required by the Treaty to do so as soon as possible. Canada actively supported the adoption of a resolution on the application of safeguards in the Middle East by the forty-ninth IAEA General Conference in September 2005. Canada has appealed to all States in the region to contribute further to regional stability and security by concluding additional protocols to their respective safeguards agreements, thereby demonstrating greater openness and transparency. These efforts have been undertaken at all levels, including coordinated demarches by the Group of Eight. Canada fully supports efforts by IAEA to convene, as soon as possible, a forum on the application of safeguards, in which countries from the Middle East and other interested parties could learn from the experience of other regions about comprehensive verification

arrangements and other confidence-building measures that could contribute to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

2. In the context of this issue, Canada continues to share the international community's concerns about the nuclear activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Canada deplores that country's failure to return to the November 2004 voluntary suspension of all sensitive nuclear activities in order to restore the international community's confidence in the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. As a result of its latest actions, the international community's ongoing and serious concerns about the nuclear activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran remain unaddressed. Canada fully supports efforts by the Security Council to consider further measures as soon as possible. The Foreign Minister of Canada indicated on 28 April 2006 that "these measures should be phased and incremental, as well as reversible. We also believe that these measures should seek to reinforce the authority of IAEA, our only 'eyes and ears' into Iran's nuclear programme". Canada continues to urge the Islamic Republic of Iran to heed the repeated calls of the international community and re-establish the conditions necessary for the resumption of negotiations for a long-term peaceful solution. We believe it is important for that country to take the necessary steps in order to restore international confidence in the peaceful nature of its nuclear activities and to enable IAEA to verify that it is fulfilling its nuclear non-proliferation obligations. Canada remains fully committed to a peaceful, durable and lasting diplomatic solution. We believe that such a solution must prevent the Islamic Republic of Iran from developing an indigenous fissile material production capability (i.e. no uranium enrichment and no plutonium separation) while addressing its security concerns. Canada will continue to support the efforts of the Security Council and IAEA in order to achieve such an outcome.

3. Canada was deeply concerned by the revelation in late 2003 of the nuclear weapons programme of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and other undeclared nuclear activities. Canada strongly supported the decision of the Libyan Government to end all nuclear weapons-related activities and the efforts of IAEA to verify that important decision. That resoluteness to disarm in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner, together with that country's commitment to accept enhanced inspections via the Additional Protocol and to respect fully all its disarmament obligations, were important steps reinforcing regional and international security.

4. When explaining its support for General Assembly resolution 60/92 on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, Canada noted that Israel's adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State would be a positive step towards preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. This statement is in conformity with the Canadian Government's 1999 disarmament and non-proliferation policy statement, which called upon Israel to accede to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State, to separate its civilian and military fuel cycles and to place its civilian nuclear activities under IAEA safeguards. It also conforms with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which calls on all States to promote the universal adoption and full implementation of multilateral treaties whose aim is to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Canada expressed its disappointment at the absence of any reference to the concealment of nuclear activities by the Islamic Republic of Iran in the resolution.

Chile

[Original: Spanish]
[1 June 2006]

Chile has supported initiatives aimed at establishing viable and realistic mechanisms to facilitate the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, particularly within the framework of the expansion and completion of the nuclear-weapon-free zones proposed by the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Jamaica

[Original: English]
[10 July 2006]

Jamaica supports the efforts of the international community to continue to promote the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world as an effective means for achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons and in strengthening peace and security at the regional and international levels.

Jamaica remains convinced that the existence of nuclear weapons constitutes a threat to the survival of humanity and that the guarantee against their use or threat of use is their total elimination so as to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Jamaica recognizes the right of any group of States to conclude regional treaties to ensure nuclear-weapon-free zones in line with article VIII of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and supports efforts to promote the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world.

Jamaica firmly supports the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones based no consensus agreements freely entered into by States of the regions concerned in support of regional peace and security, nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

Jamaica supported the establishment of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean under the Treaty of Tlatelolco and its two Additional Protocols, which are in force for all States in the region.

Jamaica also notes the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones under the treaties of Bangkok, Raratonga and Pelindaba and reiterates its strong support for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Japan

[Original: English]
[12 May 2006]

1. Lack of progress in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East poses a serious concern for the credibility of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Japan supported and continues to fully support the 1995 resolution on the Middle East adopted as the Review and

Extension Conference of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which calls for the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical or biological, and their delivery systems. In this regard, Japan joined the consensus for the adoption of resolutions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, which have been submitted to the General Assembly since 1974.

2. The establishment of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East would ultimately require the adherence by all States in the region to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by all States in the region would also be a substantial practical step towards that end. Japan has been actively taking part in international efforts to encourage universal adherence to these legally binding multilateral instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As part of such endeavours, Japan has urged the Israeli Government at the ministerial level to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State, as well as to adhere to the other treaties on weapons of mass destruction as soon as possible. Japan also has urged, at the ministerial level, the Governments of the Syrian Arab Republic, Egypt, and the Islamic Republic of Iran to adhere to the treaties relating to weapons of mass destruction at the earliest date.

3. It is no less important that compliance with these legal instruments should be fully assured. Japan also considers it crucial that the future Government of Iraq adhere to all relevant non-proliferation agreements in order to prove its willingness to behave as a responsible member of the international community.

4. In this context, Japan stresses the necessity of strengthening the IAEA system of safeguards, which plays a vital role in underpinning the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Japan strongly believes that the conclusion of IAEA safeguards agreements and additional protocols by all States in the region is essential for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

5. Japan deems it a matter of deep concern that the Islamic Republic of Iran has been continuing and indeed expanding its uranium enrichment activities in defiance of the requests of the international community. Japan strongly hopes that it will take the relevant IAEA Board of Governors resolutions and the Security Council Presidential Statement seriously and respond to them sincerely. In this regard, it is of vital importance for the Islamic Republic of Iran to take the steps required by the IAEA Board of Governors in paragraph 1 of its resolution GOV/2006/14, to, inter alia, re-establish full and sustained suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, to be verified by IAEA.

6. Japan is firmly committed to supporting the Middle East peace process, a key to achieving regional stability. Such stability is a vital factor in establishing conditions for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[24 May 2006]

With reference to the above subject, this Ministry states that Lebanon confirms as follows:

Lebanon does not possess weapons of mass destruction and is opposed to recourse to the threat or use of such weapons.

Lebanon abides by the resolutions adopted by the United Nations concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East and is cooperating in respect of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. It expresses its great concern with respect to the non-compliance of Israel with international law by virtue of its retention of a nuclear arsenal that constitutes a threat to all States of the region and therefore to international peace and security.

It supports and welcomes all initiatives aimed at achieving disarmament in general and particularly in the Middle East region and it emphasizes the role of the United Nations in achieving that end.

It is developing laws and regulations to enable the monitoring of the export, transit and cross-border carriage of any type of weapons of mass destruction and related materials.

It provides no assistance of any kind to any group that endeavours to acquire, produce, possess, transport, loan or utilize nuclear or other weapons.

It participated actively in the meeting of the technical committee of the League of Arab States which was concerned with the preparation of a draft treaty to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and which met in Cairo from 21 to 26 January 2006.

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

[Original: Arabic]
[2 May 2006]

The Great Jamahiriya supported resolution 60/52 which called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. Libyan delegations, both in the United Nations and in the International Atomic Energy Agency, have also called for the Middle East region to be free of weapons of mass destruction and have urged the four States parties that have not yet signed or ratified comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency to do so as soon as possible.

In the majority of their interventions, the delegations of the Great Jamahiriya have called for use to be made of the initiative of the Great Jamahiriya dated 19 November 2003 on getting rid of programmes, materials and equipment relating to the production of weapons of mass destruction and also for transparency in the field of comprehensive verification and other confidence-building measures that may contribute to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The Great Jamahiriya follows a path of complete transparency in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and cooperates fully with the Agency's inspectors. It applies the Additional Protocol that it signed with the Agency on 10 August 2004 and fully respects all its obligations relating to disarmament as an important steps towards strengthening regional and international security.

The cooperation displayed by the Great Jamahiriya, which it has demonstrated by its full transparency and credibility in the past, will help to create an atmosphere conducive to making the region of the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone and will encourage the continued call for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East region without exception and by all parties including Israel which possesses a large nuclear arsenal and which has not yet acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons or to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mauritius

[Original: English]
[20 June 2006]

This is indeed the desired end state for which the much needed consensus in the Arab world is not forthcoming.

Syrian Arab Republic

[Original: Arabic]
[15 May 2006]

Syria has consistently affirmed its strong desire for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and expresses its deep concern at the insurmountable obstacle to the establishment of such a zone posed by Israel through its total refusal to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This refusal persists to the present day despite the international community's repeated admonitions that Israel's obduracy is doing great damage to the credibility and universality of the Treaty and effectively prevents the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East notwithstanding the good faith of the other parties involved and the proliferation of documents and texts submitted.

The Syrian Arab Republic is of the view that the measures and arrangements necessary for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East as called for by United Nations resolutions would include the following:

1. Israel, the only State in the region to possess nuclear facilities and a nuclear stockpile, must accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, place all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and eliminate all its nuclear weapons. All of this constitutes a sine qua non for the establishment of such a zone. Israel must also comply with Security Council resolution 487 (1981) which explicitly demands that Israel urgently place its nuclear facilities under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

2. The United Nations is the proper forum for serious discussions to open the way for collective action by all States concerned in the Middle East towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

In addition, the Syrian Arab Republic has spared no effort in its urgent pursuit of making the Middle East a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, above all nuclear weapons. The most recent of such efforts was the introduction of a draft resolution to the Security Council on 29 December 2003, in a genuine initiative and sincere effort to rid the region of such weapons. However, certain States which preach the opposite of what they practise blocked that initiative in order to protect Israel and continue to provide support for the development of its nuclear arsenal which threatens the security and stability of the region. The Syrian Arab Republic recalls that its draft resolution is still "in blue" in the Council archives, and calls on the Security Council to adopt it as swiftly as possible and ensure its implementation by all States of the region, without exception, in order to pave the way for the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, above all nuclear weapons.

United Arab Emirates

[Original: Arabic]
[6 April 2006]

The United Arab Emirates supports General Assembly resolution 60/52 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

The United Arab Emirates appeals to all parties directly involved to consider taking whatever practical and urgent steps are needed to implement the proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, including compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It calls on all States to declare their support for the establishment of such a zone consistent with paragraph 63 (d) of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly.